THE PROBLEMS OF DISTANCE LEARNING EDUCATION WHILE TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES AT THE NON-LINGUISTIC HIGHER SCHOOL

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Abstract

The global development of technologies and their penetration into various areas of common life has a direct impact on the formation of a modern educational sphere. Traditional forms of teaching no longer satisfy the current needs of modern students. The accelerated pace of modern life and the constant lack of time dictate the search for other ways of learning.

The article deals with some problems of distance learning education while teaching foreign languages at the non-linguistic higher school. These problems are analyzed in detail and their possible solutions are described from the point of view of teaching modern students in the classroom, in particular, teaching them to the English language.

For example, one of the serious problems in teaching English to students in a group (which is typical for all universities in Russia) is the inability of individual students to master new material in the presence of other learners.

At first glance, the solution in this situation seems obvious: a teacher needs to devote a part of his time to individual work with each of these students separately. However, if we examine this case thoroughly, such an implementation of individual work can take time from other students who master the learning materials more rapidly.

Modern pedagogics offers the following solutions to this series of problems. Students and teachers can use capabilities of the newest information technologies, for instance distance learning education, when teachers and students are separated by space and, sometimes, time.

Besides there are a number of other problems, the solution of which is also the involvement of distance learning using digital technologies. The authors emphasise the correct organization of the process of distance learning, which itself is ambiguous and has its own characteristics. No doubt, that in most Russian universities distance learning education is not a very common teaching method.

The arrangement and management of the educational process often challenge the level of knowledge and competence of teachers in teaching foreign languages. The authors claim that the greatest difficulty is that this process has a dual structure. The teacher must not only correctly submit material on a foreign language, but also make sure how deeply the students were able to assimilate it.

The authors describe in detail the advantages of such teaching and they consistently justify the need to use all types of speech activity. The authors suggest possible exercises for a particular type of activity.

The system of control and monitoring of language learning for all types of speech activity is exemplified in detail, emphasizing the nature of distance learning education. The usage of electronic textbooks, platforms, case technologies is also described in the article. Audio and teleconferencing are involved in the process of teaching as well. This way undoubtedly makes distance teaching a competitive form of education. This method can be applied to a foreign language acquisition and English in particular.

Keywords: learning, communication, technology, education, integration, digital generation, clip thinking, mobile devices.

1 INTRODUCTION

The global and rapid technological development and expansion of all levels of knowledge in various spheres of human activity has a direct impact on the formation of modern education. It is impossible to
meet the current needs of modern students in knowledge using only traditional forms of educational environment.

Many students, working and studying at the same time, do not have enough time for the qualitative study of the necessary materials, the opportunity to attend lectures and seminars, read additional literature and prepare for exams in a timely manner.

Another serious problem when teaching students in a group (which is typical for all universities) is the inability of individual students to master new teaching materials in the presence of other classmates. Psychological and personal qualities can be cited as causes, namely: constraint and fear of being incapable or stupid, undeveloped abilities to perceive the material at a fast pace. Such students, in the classroom, make great efforts to the perception and assimilation of the material [3].

A possible solution to this situation is the implementation of an individual approach, that is, it is necessary to devote some of the time in the lessons of foreign languages to these students. That is, individual, face-to-face work with such students is absolutely necessary.

At the same time, teachers should take into account that the implementation of individual work cannot be carried out to the detriment of other students who master the materials easier and faster. To solve such problems in modern pedagogy, the possibilities of information technology are used, namely, distance learning. Distance learning makes it possible to carry out learning at a distance, in conditions where teachers and students are separated by space. However, the actual problem is the correctness of the organization of the distance learning process itself. Since distance learning is a relatively new teaching method in most Russian universities, the process of organizing and constructing the educational process using distance learning technologies is a real test of the level of knowledge and competence of teachers in teaching foreign languages. Difficulties arise because it is necessary not only to present lexical, grammatical and interdisciplinary material in a foreign language, but also to make sure that students have learned it at the necessary level [8, p.31].

2 METHODOLOGY
The purpose of the research undertaken in this article is to characterize the content of distance learning at the university in terms of its essence and organizational structure. The material of the study was scientific publications on the problems and quality of distance education, its monitoring and evaluation at the university, and the experience of distance education at the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation. The research methods are theoretical analysis and synthesis of scientific information on the topic under consideration, generalization of the experience of evaluating distance learning at the university.


3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
What are the peculiarities of distance learning a foreign language at a university? Its main feature is the mediated nature of communication between a teacher and a student and the associated limited opportunities for their interpersonal interaction. On the other hand, this form of education allows maximizing the independent work of students, which is especially important in terms of university education, as the future specialist should be able to organize their cognitive activity independently.

Distance learning involves a different form of presentation and interaction between the teacher and the student. Of course, in terms of university education, students are most likely to have a conscious attitude to the learning process, a craving for self-education and self-realization, and sufficient computer skills.

From our point of view, the advantages of distance learning include [10]:
- opportunities for students to choose their own time and space for studying;
- incentive to develop autonomy and self-discipline;
- a high level of convenience in training students burdened with families and work;
- mobility of the learning process, since the materials are available anywhere on any electronic devices.

In the system of distance learning, you can select a number of basic ways of transmitting information using:
- multimedia textbooks, teaching aids;
- computers and the Internet;
- radio and television;
- communication of teachers and students [13].

When implementing distance learning in foreign languages, teachers can use case technology and network technology, teleconferences to organize communication with students or to ensure students' mutual communication, e-mail, various chat rooms and an electronic bulletin board.

Such activities as speaking, listening, reading, and writing act as the leading component in teaching foreign languages at a higher educational institution [15, 16]. In the course of distance learning in foreign languages, students' work should be organized in such a way that they autonomously, under the guidance of a tutor, carry out these activities to develop skills in all aspects of the language.

When learning listening, it is necessary to use not only audio fragments but also video recordings containing a number of extra-linguistic and contextual keys providing some important visual elements facilitating better understanding. A positive impact is the ability to stop and re-listen or review the material, which allows students to process sounds and images, understanding the materials better. Computer multimedia programs play an important role in learning listening in a foreign language in distance learning.

When the goal of training is to teach reading skills, it is necessary to consider various options for controlling the level of understanding. As a means of control, it is possible to use testing, questions, retelling, paraphrasing, and other types of tasks. In the course of learning reading skills, students should follow the requirements developed by the teachers, that is, keep diaries that reflect their work with the texts, write down questions for the teacher, and their answers to the questions, completed control tasks [18, p.10; 7].

In the course of learning reading skills, with distance learning, each student should read and practice this type of activity independently. In the case when the purpose of training is to study the rules of reading, the textbook should include rules for reading letters and syllables, exercises for applying these rules to read individual words and sentences. Nowadays, there are a number of programs capable determine the correctness of pronunciation [13].

In distance learning, speaking and writing skills are taught through the communication of students with each other and with the teacher [16]. The implementation of learning writing skills is carried out through e-mail, chat rooms, synchronous or asynchronous communications. Learning speaking skills with distance learning is possible only by teleconferencing [18, p.82]. During communication, students use all kinds of activities:
- reading and writing skills (students communicate by writing);
- listening and speaking skills (students communicate by speaking).

The study of vocabulary is carried out using electronic textbooks [21,15] and applications with developed exercises and tasks for control and self-control. A tutor supervises all processes. It is advisable to implement this aspect of learning foreign languages using case technologies and network technologies [19, p.181]. While teaching grammar, students should be provided with access to various electronic dictionaries, textbooks, grammar reference books. In this aspect, the use of case technologies and network technologies is also appropriate. When discussing grammatical phenomena, it is possible to use all means of communication of students and teachers.

Learning phonetics is carried out in several stages. The first stage is theoretical, when students get brief theoretical information on the phonetics of the language being studied. At the practical stage, the pronunciation, intonation, speed of speech is practiced. Nowadays, technologies have been developed, allowing phonetics training in distance education. However, the most fruitful teaching of practical phonetics is carried out in the course of the student’s direct communication with the teacher. This creates
feedback allowing the teacher to hear the pronunciation of the student and correct it, if necessary. This process is possible in online television and audio conferences [22, p.36; 11].

4 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we would like to note that competent development of the didactic and technical side of distance learning foreign languages in universities, regular and professional support for students, their high motivation, the availability of the necessary teaching aids and electronic educational resources can help make distance learning foreign languages competitive and efficient.

With distance form, teachers have all the opportunities to teach students all types of speech activity and to form communicative competence, which is the main goal of teaching foreign languages in higher education.

Obviously, the rational use of modern information technologies really opens up completely new opportunities in the field of higher education, and in particular for the distance learning of foreign languages.

REFERENCES


